

## The Search For the Sand Creek Massacre by Chuck and Sheri Bowen

We first learned in 1993 of the possibility that the Sand Creek Massacre might not be at the current monument sight. In August of 1993, we received a letter from the Colorado Historical Society stating that they would like permission to go on Bowen land to research Historical trails and stage routes and their relationship to the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre. This would be in the north pasture in Cheyenne County which the National Park Service refers to as the North Bend (we will refer to it as the North Bend from this point on). In Sept. of 93, the area was searched with three helicopters and several metal detectors. We learned, too, that there was also a chance that Black Kettle's Village of 1864 might be at this location. However, artifacts were not found to support this theory. It was about this time that I bought a metal detector and began my own search. I didn't find any artifacts of an 1864 "battle" either, so the metal detector went into the closet to be stored away.

Early in 1998, Jim Kopke, who had been a part of the '93 reconnaissance project, stopped by our house and spoke briefly with Sheri. He told her that he had a pile of documents and a piece of a howitzer cannon that he had found on Bowen land. This would suggest that the massacre happened on Bowen land. She told him that we were interested in his information. He left us his phone number; however, after making numerous attempts to call and leave messages, we have not had contact with him since. Nonetheless, it sparked our interest and we decided to set out to discover if the Sand Creek Massacre happened on Bowen land. I had no idea how obsessed I would become

with this project, and in the end we spent two days a week for one year with a combined effort of over 1600 hours.

Sheri became the historian. Some of the books she read included, "The Indian Wars of 1864 Through the Sand Creek Massacre" compiled Scott Williams, "The Month of the Freezing Moon" by Duane Schultz, "Blood at Sand Creek" by Bob Scott, "The Sand Creek Massacre" by Stan Hoig, "I Stand By Sand Creek" by William Dunn, "The Sand Creek Fight" by Fred Werner, "The Life of George Bent" by George Hyde, "The Fighting Cheyennes" by George Bird Grinnell, "Jim Beckworth" by Elenoir Wilson, "The Fighting Parson" by Reginald S. Craig, "The Southern Cheyenne" by Donald Berthroung, "Massacre of Cheyenne Indians, Thirty Eighth Congress, Second Session, Congress of the United States in the House of Representatives January 16, 1865.", Kiowa County History books, 1979 Cheyenne County History book, "Sand Creek" (copies of various papers relating to the Incident compiled by the Kiowa County Museum, "The Accruements of War" by Randy Steffan, "Howell Sayre's Diary" by Howell Sayre, "The Battle Cry of Freedom" by James McPherson, Internet research on the battles of Pea Ridge and Wilson Creek (George Bent fought in both of these battles as a Confederate prior to Sand Creek).

Chuck and Sheri compiled a number of interviews including a telephone interview to California with a daughter of Bing Newsom. He homesteaded in section four -- NPS Middle Bend-- (she knew nothing of artifacts being found in that area that would suggest an 1864 battle); the Peck family of Eads, who are descendants of the Hart family who homesteaded the North Bend area (they knew nothing of artifacts being found in that area that would suggest an 1864 battle); the Root family of Lamar, the

family of the arrowhead collector Dick Root ( Don remembered hunting arrowheads with his father, and finding things north of the monument but he couldn't remember how far north or who's land it would be on today); George Crow from Eads who hunted arrowheads (he remembered finding battle artifacts on Bowen land); Alma Robertson, living at the place where she lived as a child, only a few miles from the massacre sight, remembered that before the dirt storms of the 30's, the banks of Sand Creek were much steeper and deeper especially in section ten. There were also interviews by Ava Betz, area historian; Ruthanna Jacobs, Kiowa County Historian; Butch Kelly, Civil War era enthusiast; numerous interviews at the Cowboy and Indian artifact show in Amarillo Texas and Mike Graham's Cowboy and Indian artifact Show in Colorado Springs. Information was also contributed by Sheri's family on the France side (her great-grandfather D. W. France homesteaded a few miles South of the massacre area on Rush Creek in the late 1800's, his son Kent was a cowboy and knew the area "like the back of his hand". My own general knowledge has been taken into account, having been involved with the ranch for my whole life, 47 years. This prior knowledge helped a lot with descriptions of Sand Creek found in the books.

We also poured over maps, including Colorado State Map, George Bent maps, 1962 photo ag aerial maps, Map of Ray Irrigation Ditch, topographic map, and the Bonsall map.

Kenley German and his wife came from Colby, Kansas to do metal detecting in search of stage stations and they helped me learn the metal detector as we searched along Sand Creek. Since their visit, I have walked many miles searching the banks of Sand

Creek for artifacts. We visited Bent's Old Fort, Pea Ridge and Wilson Creek Battle Grounds, Kiowa and Prowers County Museums, and Boggsville.

### Purpose of the Project

I have always been interested in the history of the ranch. When I was nine years old, my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Sibcy, brought her Indian artifacts to school and by the end of that year I decided to become an archeologist (now I feel like that life long dream is coming true with my involvement in the Sand Creek Massacre project). By the time I was twelve, my passion was Indian Lore. That year I made an Indian headdress that I proudly display in my home today. My purpose of doing this project was to learn the history of our family ranch.

### Research Tools

In the research process, we eliminated some of the books written in more recent times because we thought the author would be biased to the present site of Black Kettle's Village. Therefore, we kept the "Life of George Bent" for the first hand accounts of George Bent and Little Bear and "The Sand Creek Fight" for the first hand account of Morse Coffin and "I Stand By Sand Creek" for the first hand accounts of Private Irving Howbert. This would give us two accounts from the Village perspective and two accounts of the Soldiers perspective. The other tools we used was the metal detector and the maps.



## Distance From Fort Lyon to Black Kettle's Village

George Bent-about 40 miles north east from Fort Lyon.

Little Bear- no description given

Irving Howbert- almost due north from Fort Lyon

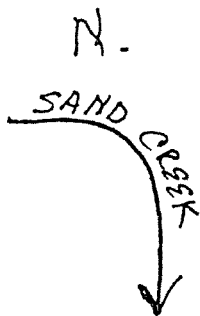
Morse Coffin- about 40 miles northward

None of these eye witness accounts disagreed with the 40 mile northward description, so I accepted this as fact. On a Colorado map, we drew a line that would intersect with Sand Creek at 40 miles. This is the assumption that they traveled in a perfectly strait line, which is doubtful. This point is about two miles up stream from Bowen property. Then, we drew a line 35 miles from Fort Lyon. This intersected Sand Creek just upstream from the present marker site. This is with the assumption that there were five miles of turns and bends in the Soldiers march to Sand Creek. We felt as though Black Kettle's Village would have to be between these two points. (see map 1).

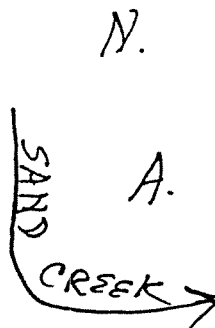
## Big Bend of Sandy Creek

Col. Chivington referred to the village site as being at the Big Bend of Sandy Creek. Other references included Big South Bend and South Bend. I think the assumption has always been this is the bend shown on George Bent's map, the creek coming from the North and turning to the East. This bothered me, because to me a big south bend would be the creek coming from the West and then turning to the South. George Bent talked

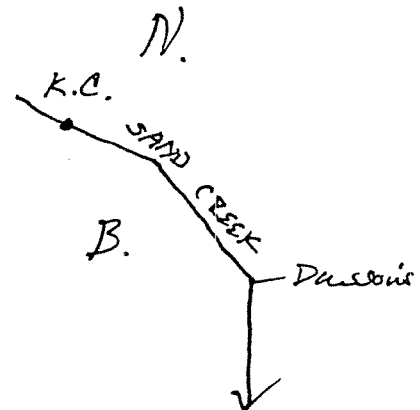
about Sand Creek flowing in a great half-circle. I highlighted Sand Creek in blue and noticed that just below Kit Carson about eight miles, Sand Creek makes a dramatic turn to the South East and where road W crosses the creek (Dawson's), the creek makes a final dramatic turn to the South. I've highlighted this area in pink. Could it be possible that these references were made to a general region on Sand Creek rather than a specific bend? This possibility allowed me to focus more on other descriptions, such as North bank, East and West banks etc... (see map 1).



What I imagine  
a big south bend  
to look like



Dawson Bend  
Middle Bend  
North Bend



Could this region  
more likely be the  
Big South Bend?

I did an experiment drawing a diagram of the bend marked "A" and a diagram of the bend marked "B" and showed this to a number of people asking them in their opinion which diagram would most accurately describe a big south bend in a creek. Without exception, each one chose diagram "B". They were drawn without the descriptions that I have above.

I now think in terms of our family ranch being in the Big South Bend of Sand Creek. If this concept is accurate, Black Kettle's Village could be anywhere between Dawson's and the North Bend and be within the Big South Bend of Sand Creek. This still hasn't narrowed down the search, and this is about the same area of our mileage estimates within about an eight to ten mile stretch of the creek.

Little Bear said that the creek came from the north and turned to the south east at the place of their village. This suggests a much shallower bend of the creek than what is shown on Bent's map's. (see maps 2 and 3) Did Hyde draw this map for Bent, and is this 90 degree turn shown incorrect? Perhaps a more gradual bend would be more accurate?

## Sand Creek:

### Did it Dramatically Change in 135 Years?

During the fifty years that Buster and Frances Bowen have owned the ranch, there have been two events that could have changed the creek. The first was the dirt storms of the 50's and the second was the flood of 1965. During the dirt storms, the fields to the north blew and some of the adjoining fences were buried by blown dirt. New fences were built on top of the old. No doubt, where the creek runs near the fields, dirt could have filled in so the banks did not appear as high. However, in speaking with my dad, his opinion is that Sand Creek looks the same as it did before the dirt storms. There may be places in the bottom of the creek that were covered by an additional foot of dirt. As far as the big picture, Sand Creek looks the same.

I remember the flood of '65 very well. At the North Bend the creek ran a mile wide. This was an incredible sight, and one that I'll never forget. Yet, after the waters resided, Sand Creek looked virtually the same. Holes were washed in the creek bottom here and there while others were filled in, but Sand Creek looked the same.

There were also the dirt storms of the 30's. The "old timers" say the dirt storms were much worse than the 50's. They say even the native grass land, as the ranch is, dried up and began to blow. They say it added dirt to the creek bottom and wore off the creek banks. This was not the case in the '50s. They remember the creek banks in section ten being steeper and deeper. Still, the big picture of Sand Creek remains: the creek banks have not dramatically changed.

In 1907, Mr. Ray built a ditch with the head-gate at the upper end of section four going almost to the end of section fourteen. The plans showed it to go on into what is now Dawson's, but the aerial agricultural maps clearly show that it ends in section fourteen. It was to be nine foot wide at the top, six foot wide at the bottom and one and a half foot deep. In section ten it ran on the east bank. This could have changed the appearance of this bank. Many of the artifacts in this area could have been picked up by canal workers. I believe this could have been the area of the rifle pits. (see map 4)

One hundred and thirty five years is a short time as far as geological changes are concerned. In order for dramatic changes to take place in that amount of time, it would take a drastic natural disaster or the destruction by man. The latter is not the case as this is native grass land. In conclusion, Sand Creek has changed very little since Black

Kettle's Village of 1864 and if the eye witness accounts are correct, we should be able to find it.

## If Sand Creek Hasn't Changed Dramatically, Why Couldn't the

### "Old Vets" agree on a site when they visited it in 1908?

To me, this isn't so hard to believe. The year 1908 was the height of the homestead era. There were more people, then, living in Kiowa County than today. Since there was water along the creeks, they were the most heavily populated. Only Indians lived there in 1864. The rapid development after the turn of the century would have dramatically changed the landscape. It would be easier to find it today than then because the homestead plots of the 1900's are again wide open prairie.

Their approach in 1908 was from Kit Carson to the south and in 1864 it was from Fort Lyon to the north. In 1908 it was summer, and in 1864 it was winter. In 1908 it was rainy and in 1864 it was cold and clear. It was a raging chaos of a battle with soldiers and Indians in 1864. In 1908 it was quiet and peaceful with homesteaders.

On their visit in 1908, the "old vets" made reference to the Creaghe place and a black man by the name of Charlie who had a corral. They also spoke of an Irishman. I was unable to positively identify any of these people from the homestead records. There was a man by the name of Charles Gibson who lived on section fourteen near the creek. I do not know if this is the same "Charlie". (see map 7)

I couldn't help but wonder if the reason that they couldn't agree on the massacre site was because they hadn't come far enough down the creek. Maybe they had stopped somewhere in Cheyenne County. Could it be possible that all of the sites were wrong? Maybe the soldiers concluded about the locale before they had actually even reached it.

## **The Lodge Trail**

According to George Bent, "A lodge trail ran from near Fort Lyon in a northeasterly direction to the head of the Smoky Hill, and we were encamped where this trail crossed Sand Creek." (pp 151.) It seems that from looking at the aerial maps and following the Lodge Trail from Fort Lyon and seeing where it crosses Sand Creek would be Black Kettle's Village—as simple as that. But, as all things with Sand Creek, every detail is very complicated, and this is no exception!!!

I believe an Indian lodge trail would have been a meandering trail as many of the Indians walked. They wouldn't be interested in the fastest route but one that came to places of water along the way. The soldiers on the other hand would be traveling the straightest and quickest route.

I saw bits and pieces from aerial maps of a trail that could have been it. The seven hundred soldiers marching to Sand Creek in Nov. of 1864 may have indeed left the fort by following the Lodge Trail; however, it was pitch dark (there was no moon) and all of these eye witness accounts say they followed the North star (Robert Bent as their guide). Therefore, I think the soldiers could have created their own trail to Black Kettle's village. Robert Bent had two brothers, a sister, and his mother, plus many other

relatives and friends at Sand Creek. It makes logical sense that he would not have led them directly to the village by the Lodge Trail that crossed Sand Creek, but would have taken them to a point down stream, a very high ridge. Here, the Indians could have seen the soldiers at this point which would have been two miles away. This would have at least given them a two-mile head start to flee towards safety. In effect, this now gives us two trails to search.

After The Sand Creek Massacre, soldiers continued traveling from Fort Lyon to old Cheyenne Wells (head of the Smoky Hill). The question here is: Was this the Lodge Trail? Chivington's Trail? Or, are we now considering a third trail? Just a few years after the massacre, Fort Lyon was moved to its new location near Las Animas. So, this could mean a fourth possible trail going to Old Cheyenne Wells. Just seeing bits and pieces of trails makes the search difficult, at best. However, at the site I believe Black Kettle's Village to have been, there is definite signs of a trail that crossed at the north bank at the lower end of the creek in section 14. This goes in the direction of old Cheyenne Wells or the head of the Smoky Hill. (see map 7)

### **Dawson Bend, Middle Bend and North Bend**

All of these bends in the creek resemble George Bent's map of Black Kettle's Village. (see maps 2 and 3) Each of these bends has a very high south bank, a west bank, and are very flat to the north. (Earlier in my report on the flood of '65, I mentioned that at the north bend the creek ran a mile wide. This just shows how flat the area to the north is). In other words these three bends have no north bank as the eyewitnesses said there was. All three of these bends are similar.

I do not believe that Black Kettle's Village is at any of these three sites for several reasons:

1. This was a winter camp. The high south bluff would have shielded the village from the solar warmth and left it totally exposed to the cold north winds.
2. This high south bluff would have blocked the view of soldiers approaching from Fort Lyon, and this would have left them in a very vulnerable position to be attacked. If the soldiers were to swing around and attack from the north, the tall south bluff and west bluff would have been somewhat of a box canyon effect that they would have been trapped in. Yes, they were sent there and told that they would be protected by the government; however, the leadership at Fort Lyon had recently changed, numerous treaties had already been broken and atrocities were being committed on both sides. I do not believe they would have placed themselves in this type of vulnerable situation.
3. As in the eye witness accounts that I will talk about later about a mile and a half upstream was the rifle pit area. There was an east and west bank, therefore the creek would have to have been running from north to south, these banks were about 200 yards wide and ten to fifteen feet high. None of these three bends has a place that meets this description a mile and a half upstream even if you take into consideration the banks could have worn off and the bottom of the creek could have filled in with dirt over the years.
4. The eye witness accounts also suggest that the Indians could see the soldiers about two miles away and the soldier accounts agree that they could see the village from two miles away. I don't believe that's possible at any of these sites if they were camped below the bluffs.
5. It is logical to me that they would camp at a north bank so it could collect some of the solar warmth from the south.
6. All of these bends have a dramatic south bank, and if this had been the place of Black Kettle's Village, I am sure the first hand accounts would have mentioned this. They made mention of the lesser banks, 4-6 foot banks on the north at the village site, at 6-12 foot banks at the Rifle pits; yet, they never made mention of the largest and most majestic bank to the south. (see map 5 for North Bend, map 6 for Middle Bend, and map 7 for Dawson Bend).



## Surprise Attack?

I believe that this was a surprise attack, in that the Indians weren't expecting to be attacked in the morning of Nov. 28 1864: however, they were given about one and a half mile lead time to escape to safety. Robert Bent, forced to be the soldiers guide, was doing everything in his power to protect his brothers, sister, mother and other family and friends. Instead of him taking them directly to the village by way of the lodge trail that crossed the creek at the village, he lead the soldiers to a place downstream about two miles from the village. From this vantage point, the Indians could clearly see objects approaching and realizing they were soldiers began to flee. (see A, 7)

As a child growing up on the ranch, I remember my mom sitting with us kids on the back steps while we listened to sounds. We could hear the train approaching Chivington from the east and this was over fifteen miles away. We could hear the cars go by on Highway 96 and this was about ten miles away. These sounds would often get the family dog stirred up and he would begin to bark. On a cold winter morning sounds travel all the further. 700 soldiers and 700 horses and the awful clatter of the mule's harness pulling four cannons would, without any doubt in my mind, gotten the dogs in the Indian camp stirred up and barking when they were several miles away. No doubt, many of the Indians fled to the rifle pits (the Indians had lived here for less than a month and the rifle pit area was probably not complete, perhaps George Bent brought this idea of fighting from rifle pits to his Indian friends from what he had learned at the Civil War battles of Pea Ridge and Wilson Creek). Other Indians stayed behind in the village thinking they

would be safe with the American flag and the white flag that Black Kettle had raised over his teepee. Some did escape, but it proved to be fatal for many. Still, Robert did all he could do to help his people.

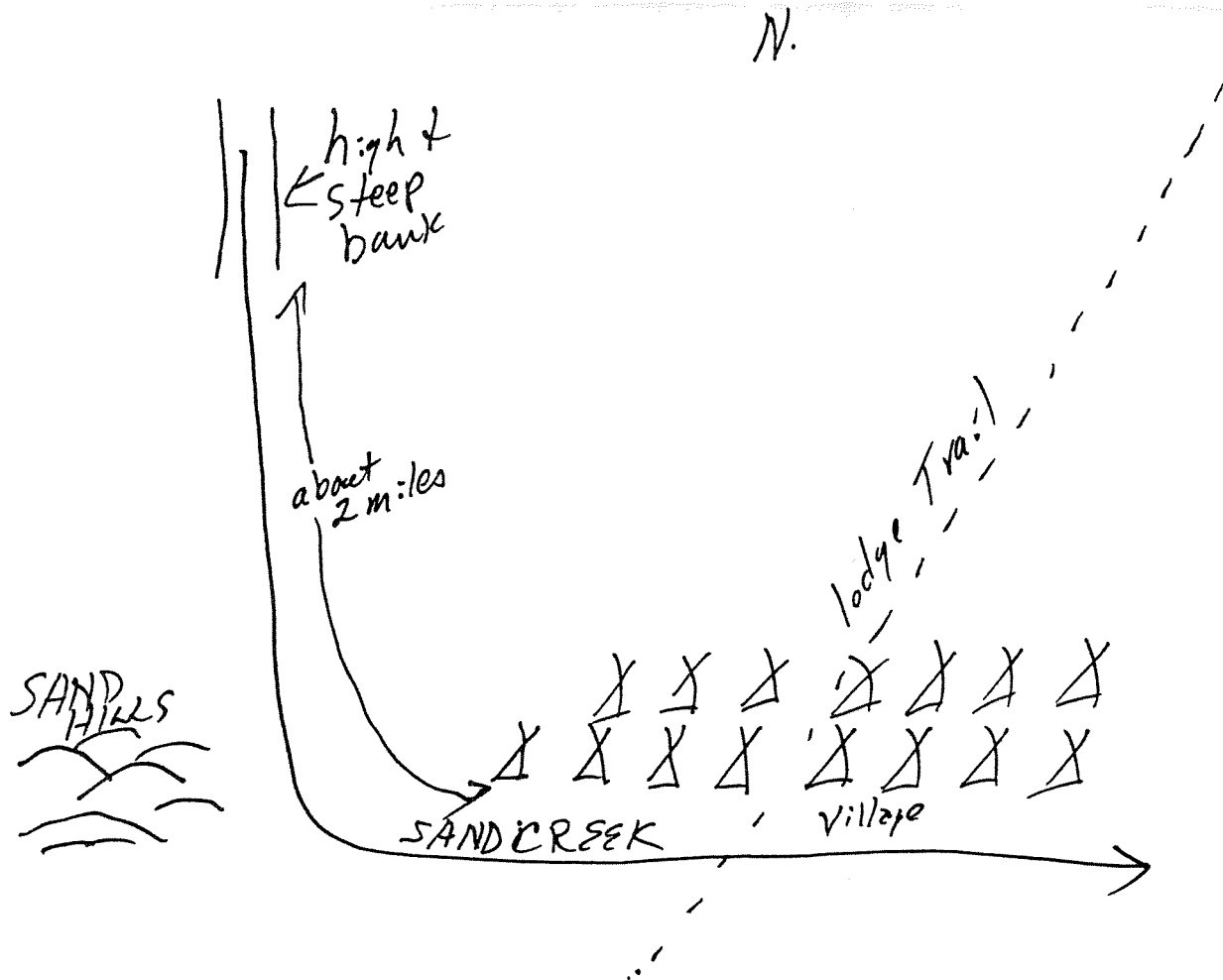
## First-Hand Accounts

George Bent- "Life of George Bent" by Hyde:

*A lodge trail ran from near Fort Lyon in a northeasterly direction to the head of the Smoky Hill, (I assume this would be the old Cheyenne Wells about five miles north of the present Cheyenne Wells that Bonsall makes reference to from his 1868 expedition) and were encamped where this trail crosses Sand Creek.*

*They ran toward the west, away from the creek making for the Sand Hills... ran back toward the creek... above the camps... we ran up the creek... we ran about two miles up the creek, I think, and then came to a place where the banks were very high and steep... had dug pits...*

From this information and George Bent's maps (see maps 2 and 3) the site would have looked something like this . (see map on next page).

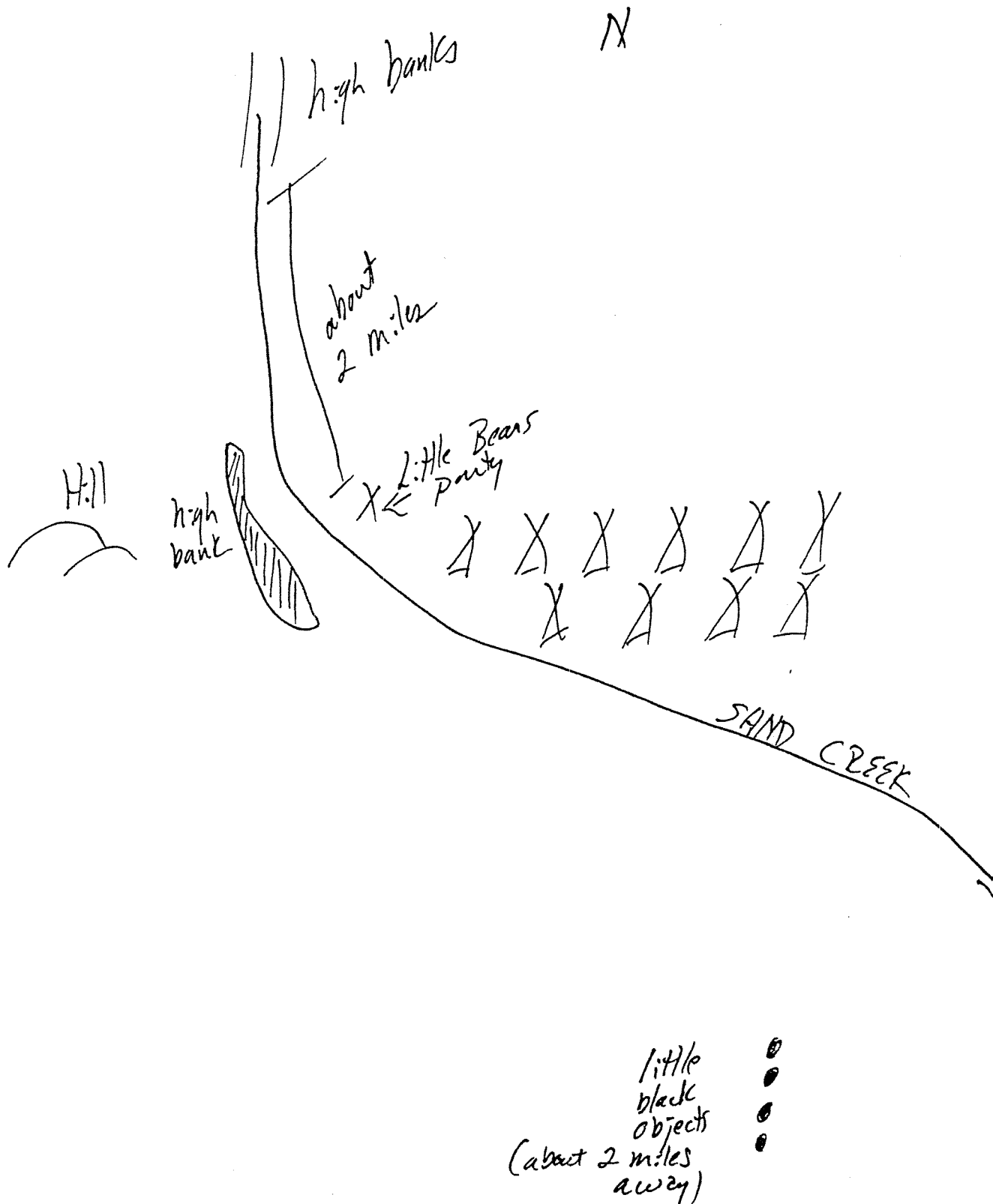


Little Bear- "Life of George Bent" by Hyde:

*I looked toward the Fort Lyon trail and saw a long line of little black objects to the south, moving toward the camp across the bare brown plane. (From my experience on the ranch in order for a man on a horse to appear to be a little black object he would have to be about two miles away, at least. Very much closer than that, I think you could easily tell it was a man on a horse. Little Bear was young and I assume had very good eyesight). ... our party was at the west end of the camps, not one hundred yards from the lodges. At this point the creek made a bend, coming from the north and turning toward the southeast just at the upper end of the village... we ran across to the west side of the creek to get under another high bank over there... they ran on toward the west, but passing over a hill... They chased me up the creek for about two miles... "I ran up the*

creek about two miles and came to the place where a large party of the people had taken refuge in holes dug in the sand up against the sides of the high banks" ...

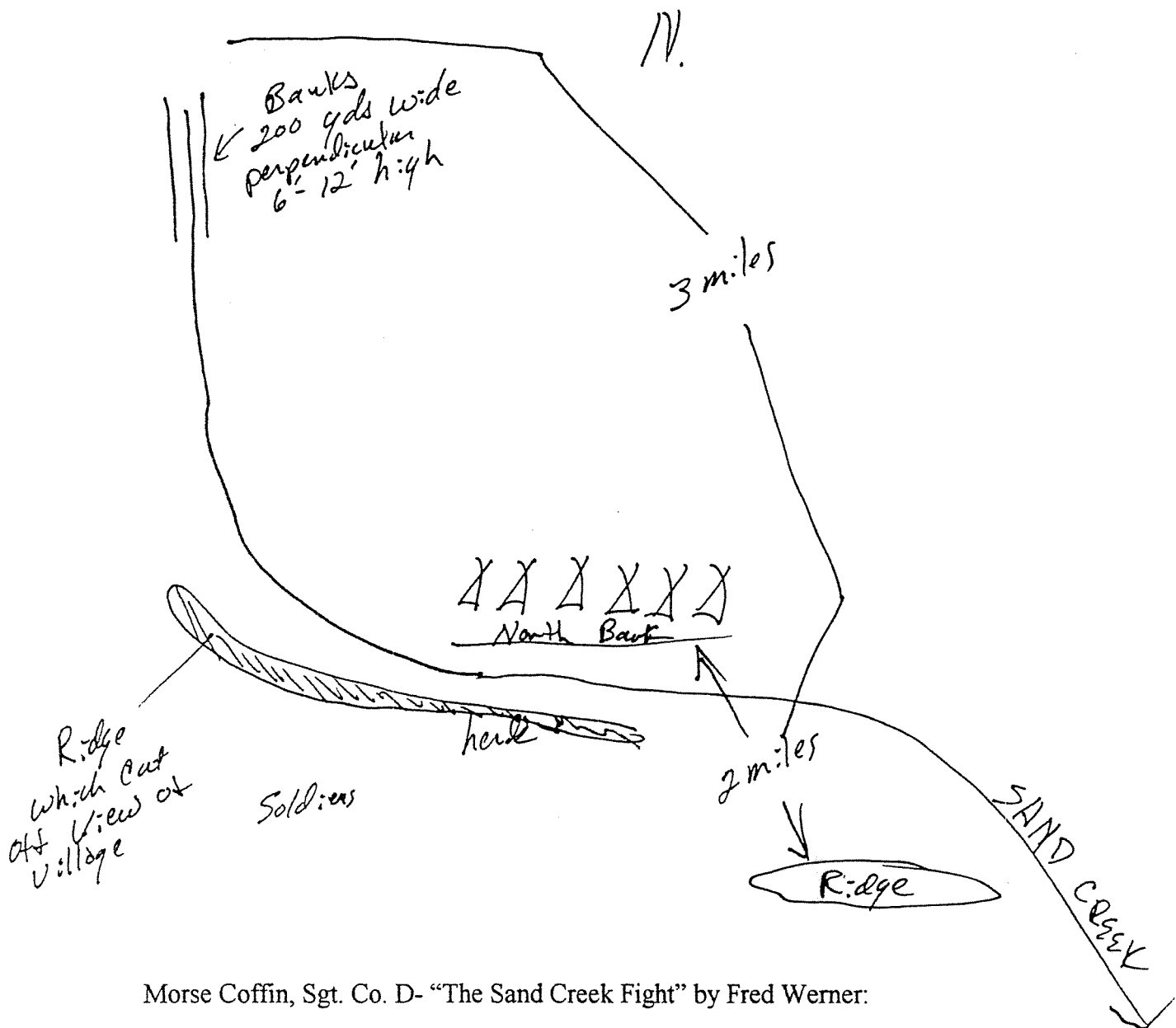
From this information we could draw a map that looks like this:



Private Irving Howbert- "I Stand By Sand Creek" by William R. Dunn:

*Just as the sun was coming up over the eastern hills, we reached the top of a ridge, and away off in the valley of the Big Sandy to the northwest we saw a great number of Indian teepees, forming a village of unusual size. (Since he used the phrase "away off in the valley" I think this would have been a considerable distance. If it were a half a mile I think he would have said a half a mile or a mile he would have said it was a mile or even the same if it was a mile and a half. He said "a way off", I'm thinking that would have been at least two miles) ... orders came directing our battalion to capture the herds. (south of the village)... the remainder of the battalion then started directly for the Indian camp which lay over a little ridge to the north of us... along the northern bank of which the Indian camp was located. Crossing the creek some distance to the eastward of the village, ... this left an opening for the Indians to the westward, up the valley of Sand Creek, and also to the northward, across the hills toward the Smoky Hill river. Before our battalion had crossed the low ridge which cut off the view of the village at the point where we captured the ponies... after the engagement commenced, the Indian warriors concentrated along Sand Creek, using the high banks on either side as a means of defense. At this point Sand Creek is about 200 yards wide, the banks on each being almost perpendicular and from six to twelve feet high. The engagement extended along this creek for three miles from the Indian encampment.*

From this information we could draw a map that looks like this:



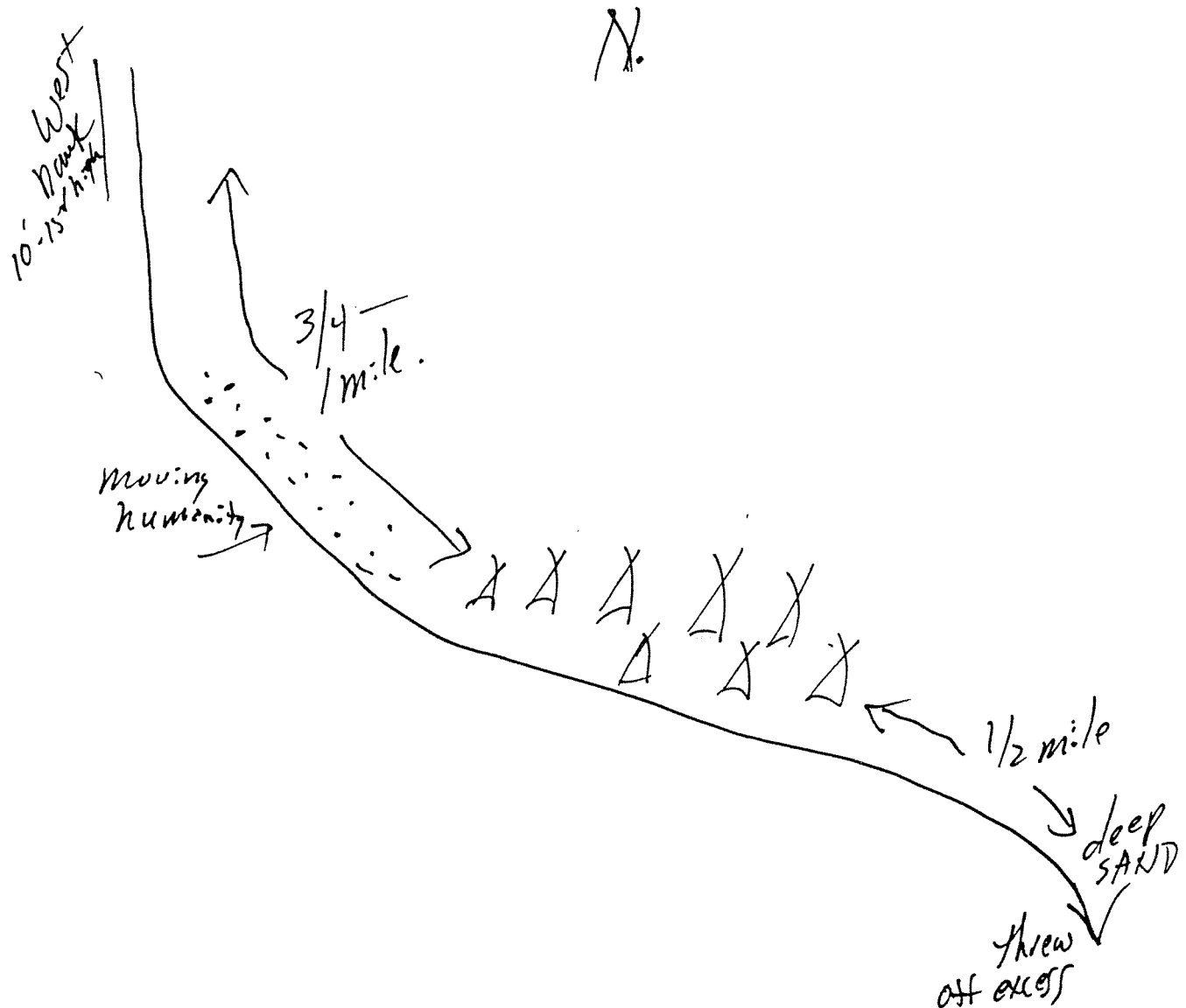
Morse Coffin, Sgt. Co. D- "The Sand Creek Fight" by Fred Werner:

...deep sand, about one half of a mile from the Indian village... ordered to throw off all superfluous luggage, such as blankets, over coats, grub. Ect... to near the edge of the Indian village, which was located on the east bank of the creek... From nearly opposite the village, and extending up the creek in a north-west direction, for, say a half a mile or more, the bed of the creek was dotted more or less thickly with moving

humanity... the artillery threw a shell which bursted in the air, perhaps a hundred feet or more... The creek bank at this place was abrupt, and perhaps four to six feet high.

(village)... But when the artillery opened there was a general scattering for both up the creek and to the banks, especially to the west bank which a mile above the village was ten or fifteen feet high... Lieut. Dickson and others saw about fifteen or twenty Indians withdraw from the rifle pits about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to a mile above the camp...

From this information we can draw a map that looks like this:



From these four eye witness accounts I compiled these facts:

**1. Ridge**

1 ½ -2 miles S.E. of village

Soldiers could be seen as little black objects and the village was in view to the soldiers

**2. Village**

- a. North Bank (creek runs W. to E.)
- b. Banks up to 6' high
- c. small ridge south
- d. trail crosses creek
- e. sand hills west

**3. Rifle Pits**

- a. East and West banks (creek runs N. to S.)
- b. Banks 6-12' high
- c. 200 yards wide between banks
- d. 1 ½-2 miles above village

**4. Creek Bend**

comes from N. turns SE

- 5. Does proposed site make logical sense for a winter camp?
- 6. Are there geological formations suspiciously absent from the accounts?
- 7. Are there artifacts to suggest a battle?

Based on this information we compiled a map. Note how similar this looks to my proposed rifle pit site on section 10(see map 6), the village site on lower end of section 14(see map 7), and the high ridge near the monument on section 24(see map 7).



N.

Rifle  
Pits

Banks  
200 yds wide  
6' - 12' high

Bank

Rifle Pits  
1 1/2 - 2 miles  
above village

SAND  
HILLS

village

North Bank 6' high

Small Ridge - cuts off view from S.

heads  
Soldiers

SAND  
CREEK

2 miles

high  
Ridge

## **Chivington and others visit the site in 1887**

Col. Chivington was invited as a guest of honor at the dedication of the town named for him. Others accompanied him to the battle site. In my opinion, he led them to the high ridge, the place where the monument stands today, and from that point might have said something like this: "There it was (pointing to the northwest) down there, Black Kettle's Village. ." Over the years, this has been misinterpreted to mean directly down there, below the bluffs. It is unlikely that he would have led the people to the exact location of the village or rifle pits; after all, only 23 years had passed and there could be gruesome reminders of that day.

## **Artifacts**

1860 artifacts are shown in Orange on the attached map (see maps 6 and 7)

**Village—(lower end of section 14)** Many bullets, casings, round lead balls, and a few metal arrowheads would prove a battle took place there. Hundreds of square nails were found and I have three explanations for their presence:

1. This whole area was strewn with small pieces of various size nails, horse shoe nails, and other small scraps of iron. These items were about an inch long. A piece of a howitzer shell was found in this area. I believe these shells could have been filled with pieces of nails, rather than the lead balls people typically think of as lead balls of this caliber were not found.
2. In one area there were square nails found that were all uniform in size. Also here a dime was found that was dated 1868. I believe these nails could have been dropped as crates were being built for either Bonsall, Cahill, or one of the other expeditions gathering artifacts to be sent to Washington D.C.
3. I found several fire hearths on the bank about eight inches deep and below the bank about 18 inches deep discovered with a metal detector because of many nails they contained. I theorize that supplies brought from Fort Lyon were brought in crates and these were used as firewood by the Indians. This left nails behind in the fire hearths.

I found a number of old style tin cans that were soldered together. Again, these could have been from their supplies from the fort.

There is also a six foot high north bank as the eye witness accounts testify. One can clearly see the high ridges to the south where the monument is, and again, this is where I am saying Col. Chivington first saw the village.

### **Rifle pit (upper part of section 10)**

Upstream 1 ½ miles is a place where there is an east and west bank about ten feet high, 200 yards wide just as eye witnesses said the rifle pit was. On a topography map it showed the 4,000 feet mark to be a very narrow place here, suggesting a canyon like appearance. (see map). <sup>15</sup> Along the east bank I found a number of bullets, casings and primer caps. The rifle pits themselves, assuming they were three feet deep at the time and now covered by an additional 2 feet of dirt, would be too deep for my metal detector. (see map 6)

### **The Bonsall Map—Final Proof**

June 15, 1868 Lieut. Bonsall led nine men to old Cheyenne Wells. He made a strip map and a journal of his trip. Within this journal were four entries of particular interest: (see maps 8 and 9)

*5:30 am June 17, 1868*

*Weather cool and clear. -left camp number 2. (Chivington's massacre site)*

*7:30am*

*Road good, water can be found by digging in the bed of the stream, grass good, small cottonwoods along the banks of the stream.*

*6 miles*

9:00am

*Weather clear and cool- at Three Forks the left hand road crosses the creek and leads in the direction of Denver, an ox train from the Arkansas bound for Denver had lately passed over this road. The right hand road is the direct and shortest road leading to Cheyenne Wells, but thinking it bore too much East we took the center road, which after following for a mile was lost, we then went due North by the compass, over a high prairie, with a gradual assent, very little---- (?), and struck the Old Butterfield Stage Road eight miles from Three Forks, and sixteen miles from Cheyenne Wells, No wood or water. Grass poor.*

8 miles

1:00pm

*Road good but hilly, and very little used, Found plenty of good water in ponds on the right side of the road. No wood, grass good.*

16 miles.

From Three Forks (see map 5) it was a simple matter of measuring six miles downstream to camp number two. This would be just a little into Dawson's. From where he begins his line that represents the two mile stretch of "Chivington's Massacre" is about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile upstream from camp number two. This is also the place where I think the village to be. At the end of his two mile site would be at the end of my proposed rifle pit area. This is the final proof to my theories. Also, from Three Forks, he gives the distances that he travels north to Cheyenne Wells and from my map you can see how this confirms my Three Forks site, as well as the aerial maps show it clearly. (see map 10)

In conclusion, Chivington first saw Black Kettle's Village from the monument site in section 24, they rode down into the creek and about a half a mile from section 14 stopped and threw off all of their excess, such as coats, grub, etc. Leut. Bonsall's camp would be in this area (there should be artifacts of this nature in both of these sites). The main part of the camp, being at the lower end of section 14, was attacked. Some Indians fled to the west of the village to the sand hills (this is the only proposed village site where

there are sand hills to the west that one could reasonably flee to for protection). Along the south and west side of the creek there is a ridge where just beyond the ridge, the view of the village is obstructed just as the first hand accounts of the soldiers reported. Many Indians fled to the rifle pit area. This is the only area along this stretch of Sand Creek that fits the description of banks 200 yards wide that were high and steep with an east and west bank. (see maps 6 and 7)

This concludes our Sand Creek report which the National Park Service requested which we hope will clarify the video we sent to the N.P.S. in May on our findings. The military items we found were bullets, casings, musket balls, a howitzer spherical shell piece, a brass cavalry spur, and a piece of a bit. The Indian related items that we found were three metal arrowheads, two cone tinklers, and two awls which appeared to be traded items and not Indian made.

It was the Colorado Historical Society that first got me so intensely interested in finding the location of the Sand Creek Massacre in 1993. After all, it's pretty hard to ignore three Huey Helicopters and a bunch of metal detectors. Early in '98, Sheri and I began our research and completed our findings in the summer of '98. The bill was signed to find the massacre sight in October and thus involved the N.P.S. To us it seemed the honorable and right thing to do to share our information with the N.P.S. As I stated earlier, I was simply interested in learning the history of the ranch. From what I understand Bill Dawson wants to sell his land to the National Park Service. We would like to show our support of that idea if that is what he wants to do. Even if my findings are correct what happened on the Dawson's is very significant. The monument has been

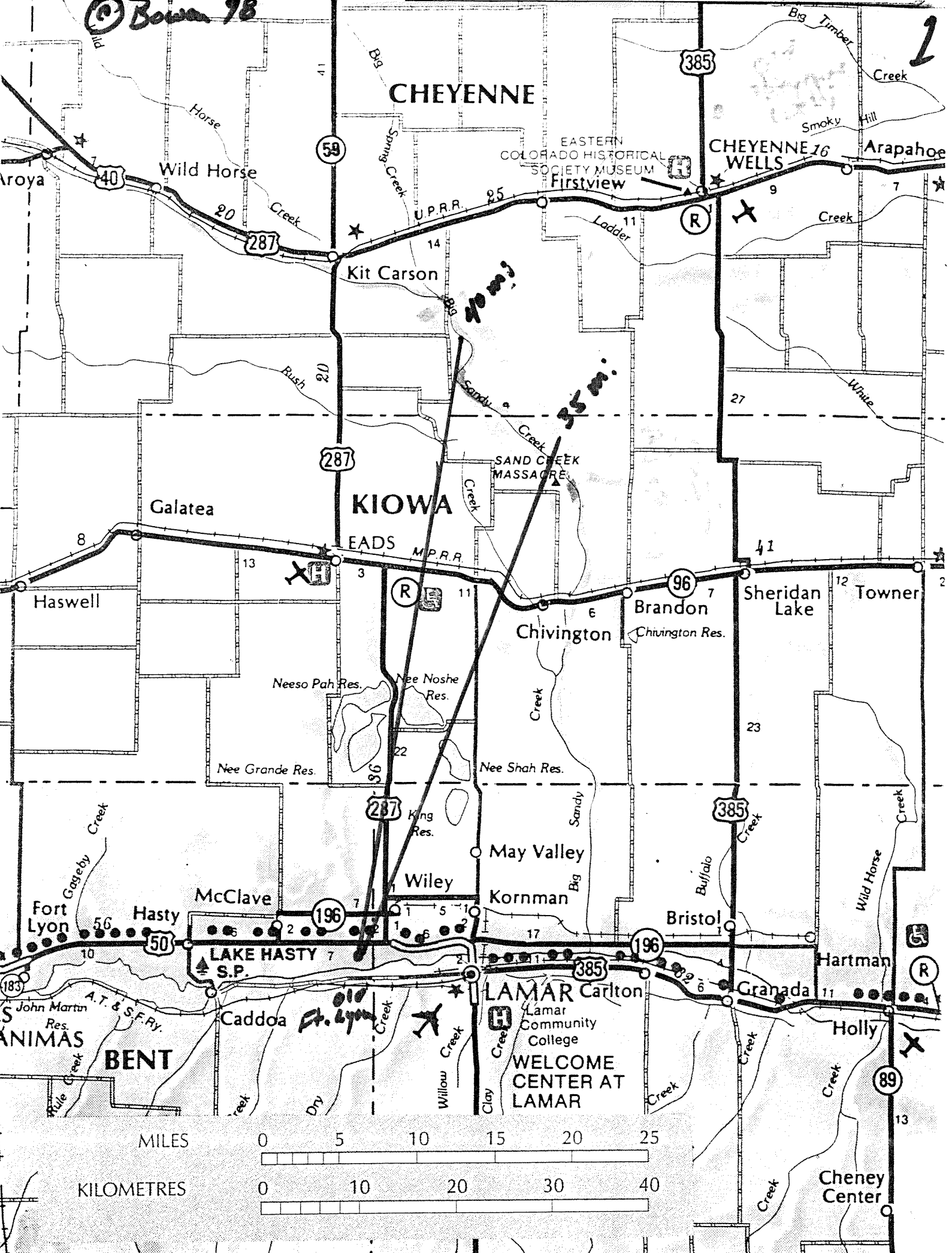
on his site for many years and he is the one that has dealt with the visitors for the last 30+ years. This is also the best access. It seems some people see us in some sort of competition with Bill. Nothing could be further from the truth. We hope everything works out to the good of everyone.

Researched and submitted by Chuck and Sheri Bowen August 1, 1999.

Typed and edited by Angela Bowen Havenstein and Michael Bowen.

© Bowen 78

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Sand Creek

- Sand Hills Ranch 1
- Black Hill's Ranch 2
- White Oak Ranch 3
- Brick Town Ranch 4
- New Products Ranch 5
- Quincy Camp 6
- Chimney Rock Ranch 7
- Bluff Ranch 8
- 10

12  
13  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1

10

10

10

10

10

# MAP OF RAY IRRIGATION DITCH

IRRIGATION DIVISION No 2, WATER DISTRICT No 67

COURSES TRUE, MAGNETIC VARIATION 11° 45' E.

SCALE 1 INCH = 1000 FEET.

## STATEMENT

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS: THAT THE UNDERSIGNED, FRANK OLIVER RAY CLAIMANT, WHOSE POST OFFICE ADDRESS IS CITY HALL, PUEBLO, COLORADO, HAS CAUSED TO BE LOCATED THE RAY IRRIGATION DITCH AS HEREINAFTER MENTIONED, HAVE MADE THESE SEVERAL STATEMENTS RELATIVE THERETO, AND FILED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF COLORADO. THE ACCOMPANYING MAP, WHICH SHOWS THE LOCATION OF SAID DITCH, FORMS A PART OF THIS FILING AND IS HEREBY MADE A PART THEREOF.

FIRST: THE HEADGATE IS LOCATED AT A POINT ON THE EAST BANK BIG SANDY CREEK FROM WHICH IT DERIVES ITS SUPPLY OF WATER, WHENCE THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SECTION No 4, TOWNSHIP No 17, RANGE 46 WEST OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN BEARS N 78° 25' E 5240 FEET.

SECOND: THE LAND TO BE IRRIGATED CONSISTS OF 610 ACRES LOCATED AS FOLLOWS: ALL OF THAT PART OF SECTIONS 14 AND 24, TOWNSHIP No 17, RANGE 46 WEST OF 6<sup>TH</sup> PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN WHICH LIES NORTH AND EAST OF BIG SANDY CREEK AND SOUTH OF SAID DITCH.

THIRD: THE DEPTH OF SAID DITCH IS 15 FEET.

THE WIDTH OF SAID DITCH IS 9 FEET ON TOP

THE WIDTH OF SAID DITCH IS 5 FEET ON THE BOTTOM.

THE GRADE OF SAID DITCH IS 46 FOOT PER 1000 FT.

THE LENGTH OF SAID DITCH IS 3018.5 FEET.

FOURTH: THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF SAID DITCH IS 15 CUBIC FT. PER SECOND OF TIME (OBTAINED BY KUTTER'S FORMULA, USING N = .002), FOR WHICH CLAIM IS HEREBY MADE FOR IRRIGATION PURPOSES.

FIFTH: THE ESTIMATED COST IS \$3000.00

SIXTH: WORK WAS COMMENCED BY SURVEY ON THE 14<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY A.D. 1907.

STATE OF COLORADO } ss.  
COUNTY OF PUEBLO

FRANK OLIVER RAY BEING DULY SWORN ON OATH DEPOSES AND SAYS THAT HAVING READ AND EXAMINED THE MAP AND STATEMENTS HERE ON, THAT THE SAME ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF MARCH, A.D. 1907.  
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES JULY 23<sup>RD</sup> 1907.

Albert C. Rich, NOTARY PUBLIC.

STATE OF COLORADO } ss.  
COUNTY OF PUEBLO

FRANK O. RAY, BEING DULY SWORN ON HIS OATH, DEPOSES AND SAYS THAT HE IS THE ENGINEER OF THE RAY IRRIGATION DITCH, THAT THE SURVEY OF THE SAME AND THE MAP THEREOF WAS MADE BY HIM AND THAT SUCH SURVEY IS ACCURATELY REPRESENTED UPON THIS MAP; THAT HE HAS READ THE STATEMENTS THEREON, AND THAT THE SAME ARE TRUE OF HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF MARCH, A.D. 1907.  
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES JULY 23<sup>RD</sup> 1907.

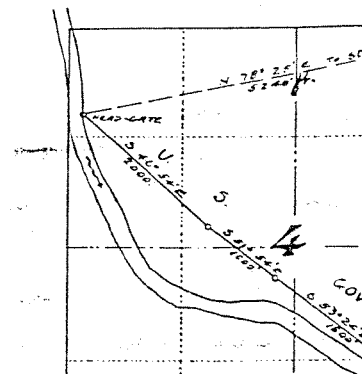
Albert C. Rich, NOTARY PUBLIC.

STATE OF COLORADO } ss.  
CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

STATE ENGINEER'S OFFICE  
DENVER, COLO.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS MAP AND STATEMENT HAS BEEN EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY ME AS AGREEING WITH THE STATUTES OF THE STATE OF COLORADO AND THE REGULATIONS OF THIS OFFICE, AND WAS ACCEPTED FOR FILING ON THE 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MARCH A.D. 1907.

W. J. Jayce, STATE ENGINEER  
BY C. W. Beach, DEPUTY  
J. R.

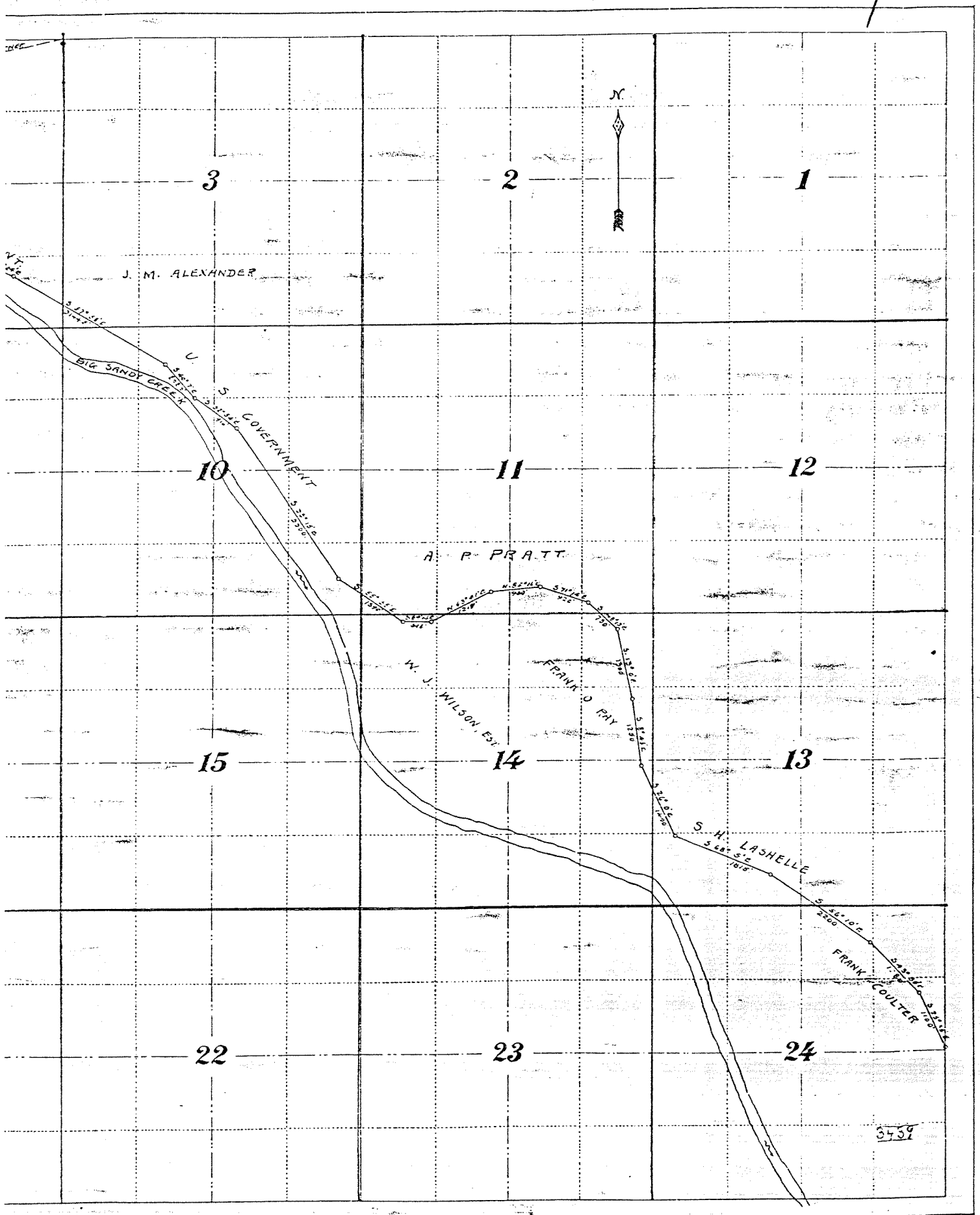


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16

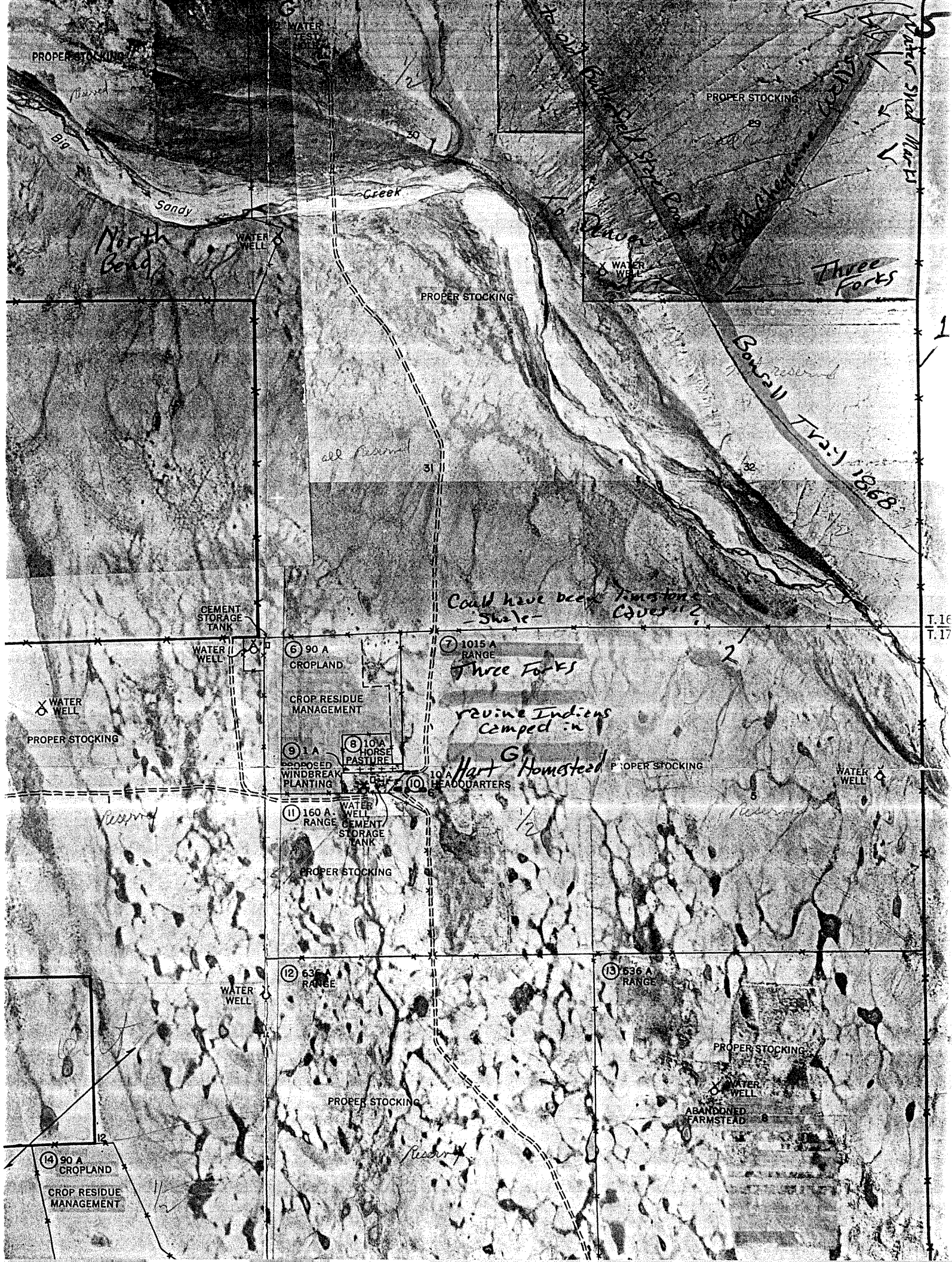
21

4



3439









Three Forks  
about 1/3 mile  
above m.p.

A

6

Bowling Trail

1868

CHATEAUNE COUNTY

T. 175

A

3

Middle Bend

F

Bowling Trail

1868

1900

175

SAND  
HILLS

Caspar  
Spur

1860's artifacts G Newsom Homestead





- A Golden Fort 720 Village
- B Indian Fort 250 Village
- C Indian Camped Considerable Distance from Main Camp
- D Indian Camp #2
- E Black Hills Village
- F Black Hills

Dawson Bend

Sand

Good good, water can be found by digging in the bed of the stream, it is good, and the insects above the

12-11-1971

2011/11/10

10/10/10

6289

*John*

12/20/11

898/

4.80%

*[Signature]*

*John*

288

W. J. R. R.

*Sancta de Rosal*

Big Sandy Creek

Everest's chimney  
mountain with

Quadrant

Young

*Dr. J. C. ...*

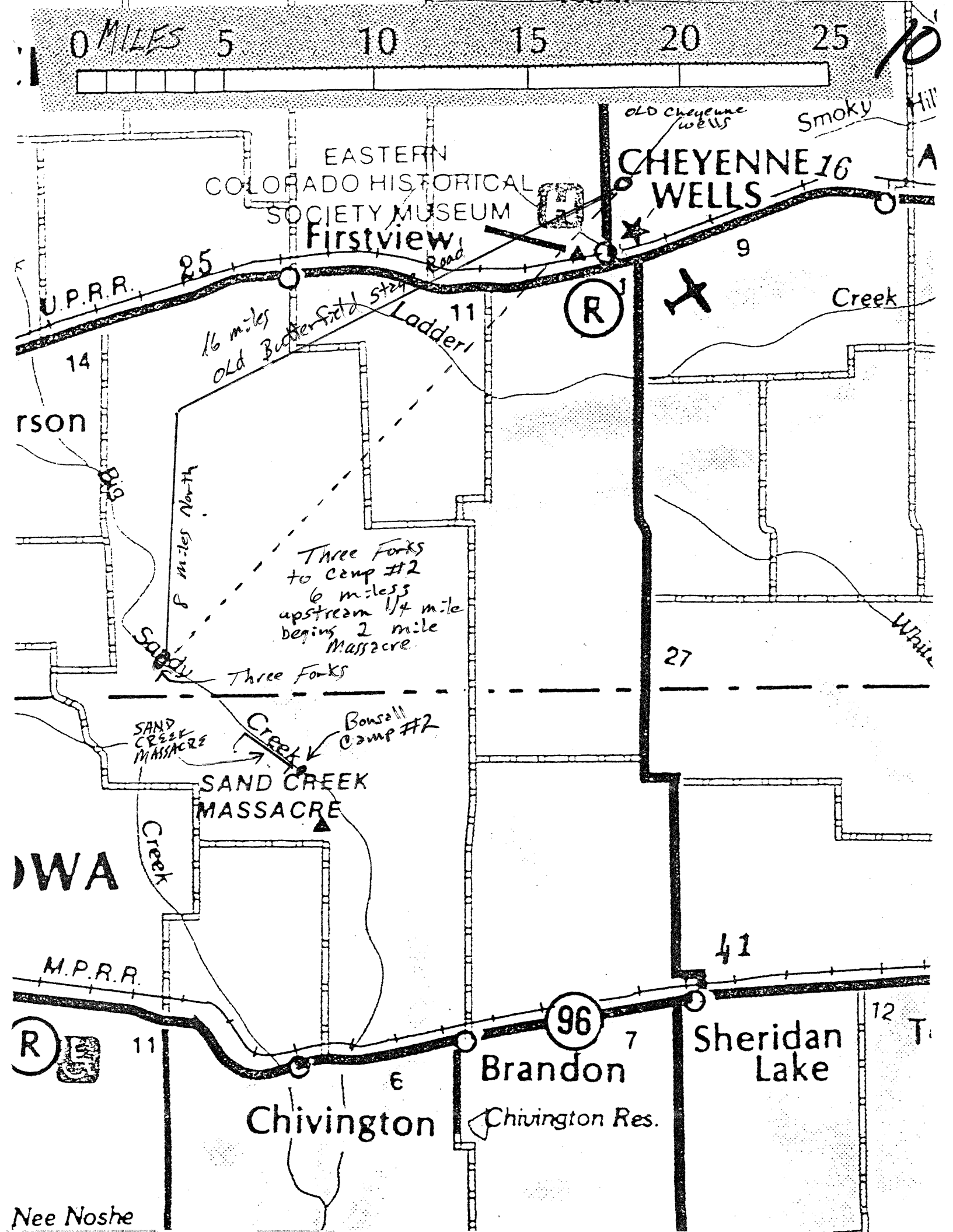
*Lodge Point - N. P.*

But good—runs over high prairie—nearly level, with  
a slight ascent. Road is so high and well drained that  
it would not be much affected by rain. No wood or  
under grass about buffalo

for two or four miles after leaving Sawmills camp, the road has been overlanded the balance of the way high and dry. There was no water in the lower part of the valley, and plenty of good water by running a dam. The sand in the bed of the creek, above the crossing, there are a few shrubs called wood roses along the banks of the stream. No water to be found between Sawmills camp and the crossing, in that diggings. There is excellent at the crossing.

Attracted to the point of view to gauge the distance, roads good - dry weather. Lower would hold water in wet weather, and in very rainy weather would be impassible. Plenty of good water in Quabbin, also water in pools in sand bed where the road approaches moved to it. From the point where the road runs near - with sand bridge, to dam, and Camp, the road shows signs of having been replaced to the south of dam two to four feet. Only of drift wood near Greenwalds Camp - grass good - a few ever. All cotton wood there as sand beach





North Bend



11

Work MAP

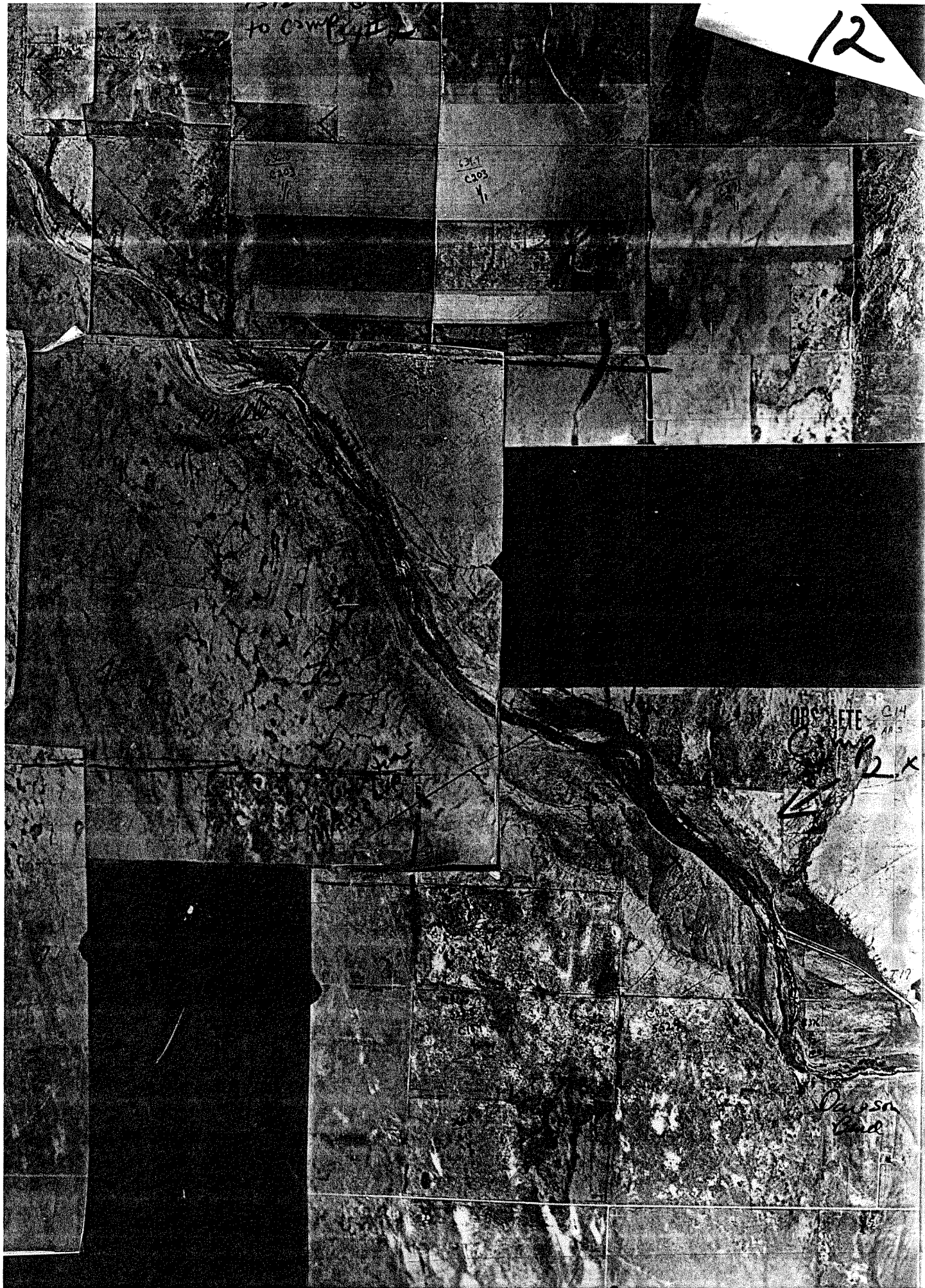
Bonsell  
2 mile  
Massive

10" = 6 m

x Camp  
#2



work map



October 26th, 1998

STATE OF COLORADO  
COUNTY OF PROWERS

Charles D. Bowen, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that the attached photographs marked as exhibits A thru J, and aerial photographs numbered as 1 of 4, 2 of 4, 3 of 4 and 4 of 4, situated in R 46W - T17S - Section 25-24-N $\frac{1}{2}$  of 23-13-14-15-9-10-11-4-5 in Kiowa County, State of Colorado and R46W-T16S-Sections 29-30-31-32 and R47 W - T16S-Section 2 in Cheyenne County, State of Colorado are a true and accurate account of the locations of events that occurred during the Sand Creek Massacre, as interpreted by Charles D. Bowen.

Charles D. Bowen

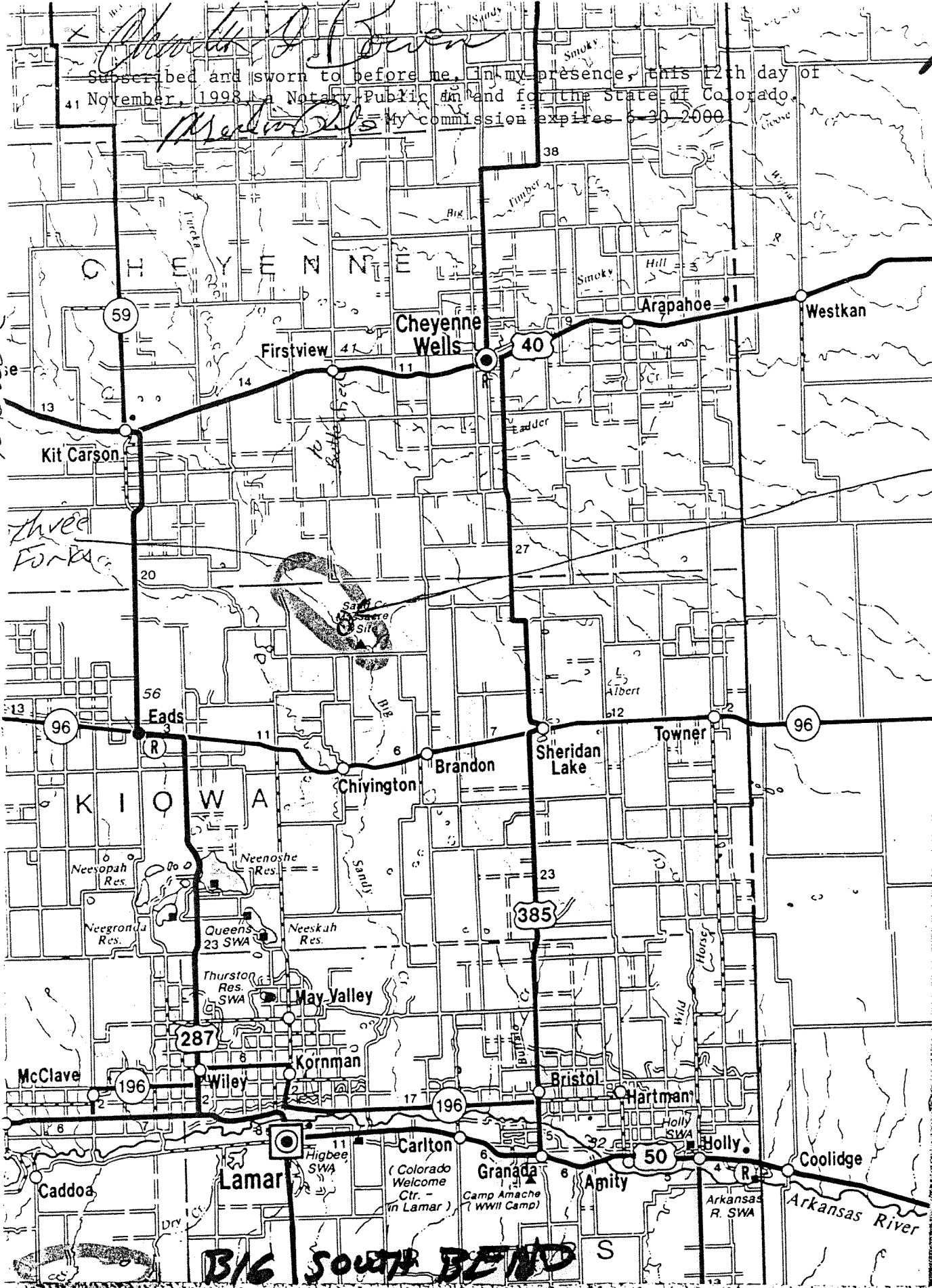
Subscribed and sworn to before me, in my presence, this 27th day of October 19 98, a Notary Public in and for the State of Colorado.

Robert Rife  
Notary Public

My commission expires

6-30-2000

These show the rifle  
pits in Sec. 10 and  
the village in Sec. 14.  
If you would like to  
see these photographs  
and aerial photographs  
in my original research  
let me know.  
Chuck



Subscribed and sworn to before me, in my presence, this 12th day of  
41 November, 1998, a Notary Public in and for the State of Colorado.  
My commission expires 6-30-2000

14

Village was here — 2 mi. NW Monument  
where the trail crosses SAND CREEK  
Monument NW corner of old Fort SAW Village

11-12-1998

Charles D. Bowen  
11/12/98  
Bowen, D. Bowen

**BIG SOUTH BEND**

Approx. at Ft. Lyon trail to the Smoky Hill.  
Followed Sand Creek NW to 3-Forks then going to the  
Smoky Hill. This region is known as the **BIG SOUTH BEND**

